## IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA

:
: CIVIL ACTION
: : No
: :
JURY TRIAL DEMANDED
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; ; ;

### **CIVIL ACTION COMPLAINT**

Plaintiff, by and through his undersigned counsel, hereby avers as follows:

### INTRODUCTION

1. This action has been initiated by David Kuzmanich (hereinafter referred to as "Plaintiff," unless indicated otherwise) against Target Corporation (hereinafter referred to as "Defendant") for violations of the Family and Medical Leave Act ("FMLA" - 29 U.S.C. §§ 2601 et seq.) and Pennsylvania common law. As a direct consequence of Defendant's unlawful actions, Plaintiff seeks damages as set forth herein.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Plaintiff has dual-filed claims of actual, perceived, record of disability discrimination, retaliation, and failure to accommodate with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission ("EEOC") and the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission ("PHRC"). Plaintiff intends to amend his complaint to include the aforesaid claims under the Americans with Disabilities Act ("ADA" - 42 USC §§ 12101 et. seq.) once such claims have been administratively exhausted with the EEOC and the EEOC issues a right-to-sue letter. Plaintiff also intends to amend his instant lawsuit to include the same claims under the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act ("PHRA") once his administrative remedies are fully exhausted with the PHRC.

### JURISDICTION AND VENUE

- 2. This Court, in accordance with 28 U.S.C. § 1331, has jurisdiction over Plaintiff's claims because this civil action arises under laws of the United States.
- 3. This Court may properly maintain personal jurisdiction over Defendant because Defendant's contacts with this state and this judicial district are sufficient for the exercise of jurisdiction over Defendant to comply with traditional notions of fair play and substantial justice, satisfying the standard set forth by the United States Supreme Court in International Shoe Co. v. Washington, 326 U.S. 310 (1945) and its progeny.
- 4. Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1391(b)(1) and (b)(2), venue is properly laid in this district because all of the acts and/or omissions giving rise to the claims set forth herein occurred in this judicial district, and in addition, Defendant is deemed to reside where it is subject to personal jurisdiction, rendering Defendant a resident of the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

### **PARTIES**

- 5. The foregoing paragraphs are incorporated herein in their entirety as if set forth in full.
  - 6. Plaintiff is an adult individual, with an address as set forth in the caption.
- 7. Defendant is a department store retailer with multiple locations throughout the United States, including the location that Plaintiff worked at in Philadelphia, PA (as identified in the above-captioned address).
- 8. At all times relevant herein, Defendant acted by and through its agents, servants and employees, each of whom acted at all times relevant herein in the course and scope of their employment with and for Defendant.

### FACTUAL BACKGROUND

- 9. The foregoing paragraphs are incorporated herein in their entirety as if set forth in full.
- 10. Plaintiff was hired to work for Defendant in or about July of 2011 and remained employed with Defendant for approximately seven (7) years until he was wrongfully terminated on or about June 8, 2018 (discussed further *infra*).
- 11. At the time of his separation from Defendant (on or about June 8, 2018), Plaintiff was employed as a Maintenance Mechanic.
- 12. Throughout his tenure with Defendant, Plaintiff was a dedicated and hard-working employee and prior to August of 2017, Plaintiff lacked any significant disciplinary history.
- 13. On or about August 4, 2017, Plaintiff suffered a work-related injury while performing work for Defendant and reported same to Defendant's management.
- 14. As a result of his work-related injuries (discussed *supra*), Plaintiff filed a workers' compensation claim and sought medical treatment.
- 15. Following his August 4, 2017 work-related injury, Plaintiff began to suffer from a serious health condition related to his ankle and requested light-duty work because he had some work restrictions.
- 16. In retaliation for filing a workers' compensation claim and requesting accommodations for the health conditions that stemmed from his work-related injury, Defendant's management subjected Plaintiff to hostility and animosity, including but not limited to:

- i. Failing to adhere to Plaintiff's aforesaid work restrictions and instead assigning him tasks that fell outside of his light-duty request;
- ii. Pretextually reprimanding Plaintiff; and
- iii. Treating Plaintiff in a rude and demeaning manner.
- 17. Approximately three weeks after his aforesaid work-related injury, Plaintiff's health condition grew worse and he was placed in an orthopedic boot, which decreased his mobility.
- 18. Shortly after being placed in a orthopedic boot, Defendant's HR department, specifically Dara Mehler (*hereinafter* "Ms. Mehler"), finally met with Plaintiff to determine if they could accommodate his aforesaid disabilities.
- 19. Approximately 1.5 weeks after Plaintiff's aforementioned meeting with Ms. Mehler, he was placed out of work on a medical leave because Defendant's Human Resources ("HR") department indicated they could not accommodate his health conditions.
- 20. Plaintiff asked Ms. Mehler during his aforementioned meeting with her (well after he sustained his work-related injury discussed *supra*) if this meeting should have taken place when he was first injured and began suffering from health conditions. In response, Ms. Mehler agreed that a meeting should have taken place sooner than it had but she did not know what she was doing.
- 21. Plaintiff was thereafter placed on an FMLA-qualifying medical leave of absence from in or about September of 2017 through in or about January of 2018.
- 22. Upon his return to work from medical leave in or about January of 2018, Plaintiff complained to Defendant's District HR Manager, one Dana Ricciardi, that he believed his workers' compensation claim was mishandled by Ms. Mehler, including but not limited to that

she had failed to have an interactive meeting with Plaintiff to determine if he could be accommodated when he first informed them that he had restrictions and needed accommodations.

- 23. Almost immediately upon his return to work following his medical leave and after complaining to Ms. Ricciardi (discussed *supra*), Plaintiff began to be subjected to increased hostility and animosity, including but not limited to being issued various pretextual disciplines.
- 24. On or about June 8, 2018, Plaintiff was terminated from his employment with Defendant after 7 years of dedicated service for alleged performance issues. However, Plaintiff was never informed that his performance was an issue prior to his workers' compensation claim and medical leave.
- 25. Plaintiff believes and therefore avers that his termination was completely pretextual, as he was terminated (1) shortly after seeking workers' compensation benefits; (2) after being subjected to multiple forms of hostility following his workers' compensation claim and request for reasonable accommodations due to the health conditions stemming from his work-related injury; (3) at a time when he was confiding in Defendant's management about his aforesaid health conditions; (4) in close proximity to returning from an FMLA-qualifying leave of absence; and (5) after complaining to Defendant's management that he believed his workers' compensation claim was mishandled by Ms. Mehler, including but not limited to that she had failed to have an interactive meeting with Plaintiff to determine if he could be accommodated when he first informed them that he had restrictions and needed accommodations.

## First Cause of Action <u>Violations of the Family and Medical Leave Act ("FMLA")</u> (Retaliation & Interference)

- 26. The foregoing paragraphs are incorporated herein in their entirety as if set forth in full.
- 27. Plaintiff was an eligible employee under the definitional terms of the FMLA, 29 U.S.C. § 2611(a)(i)(ii).
- 28. Plaintiff requested leave from Defendant, his employer, with whom he had been employed for at least twelve months pursuant to the requirements of 29 U.S.C.A § 2611(2)(i).
- 29. Plaintiff had at least 1,250 hours of service with Defendant during his last full year of employment.
- 30. Defendant is engaged in an industry affecting commerce and employs fifty (50) or more employees for each working day during each of the twenty (20) or more calendar work weeks in the current or proceeding calendar year, pursuant to 29 U.S.C.A § 2611(4)(A)(i).
- 31. Plaintiff was entitled to receive leave pursuant to 29 U.S.C.A § 2612 (a)(1) for a total of twelve (12) work weeks of leave on a block or intermittent basis.
- 32. Defendant committed interference and retaliation violations of the FMLA by (1) terminating Plaintiff for requesting and/or exercising his FMLA rights; (2) considering Plaintiff's FMLA needs in making the decision to terminate his employment; and (3) by taking actions towards him that would dissuade a reasonable person from exercising his rights under the FMLA, including but not limited to issuing Plaintiff pretextual and retaliatory discipline.
  - 33. These actions as aforesaid constitute violations of the FMLA.

# Second Cause of Action Common-Law Wrongful Discharge (Public Policy Violation)

- 34. The foregoing paragraphs are incorporated herein in their entirety as if set forth in full.
- 35. Upon information and belief, Plaintiff was terminated in substantial part for making a claim for workers' compensation benefits and/or seeking workers' compensation benefits and/or for his work-related injuries (as discussed *supra*).
- 36. It is against Pennsylvania's public policy for an employee to be terminated for making a workers' compensation claim and/or seeking workers' compensation benefits. These actions as aforesaid constitute wrongful termination in Pennsylvania. *See Shick v. Shirey*, 552 Pa. 590, 716 A.2d 1231 (1997); *Rothrock v. Rothrock Motor Sales, Inc.*, 584 Pa. 297, 883 A.2d 511, 516 (2005).
- 37. The antagonism that Plaintiff faced between filing a claim for workers' compensation and his termination creates an inference that his termination was in retaliation for making such a claim.
- 38. These actions as aforesaid constitute wrongful termination in Pennsylvania.

  WHEREFORE, Plaintiff prays that this Court enter an Order providing that:
- A. Defendant is to compensate Plaintiff, reimburse Plaintiff, and make Plaintiff whole for any and all pay and benefits Plaintiff would have received had it not been for Defendant's illegal actions, including but not limited to back pay, front pay, salary, pay increases, bonuses, insurance, benefits, training, promotions, reinstatement, and seniority.
- B. Plaintiff is to be awarded punitive and/or liquidated damages, as permitted by applicable law, in an amount believed by the Court or trier of fact to be appropriate to punish

Defendant for its willful, deliberate, malicious and outrageous conduct and to deter Defendant or other employers from engaging in such misconduct in the future;

- C. Plaintiff is to be accorded other equitable and legal relief as the Court deems just, proper, and appropriate (including but not limited to damages for emotional distress / pain and suffering);
- D. Plaintiff is to be awarded the costs and expenses of this action and reasonable attorney's fees as provided by applicable federal and state law.

Respectfully submitted,

KARPF, KARPF & CERUTTI, P.C.

By:

Ari R. Karpf, Esq. 3331 Street Road Two Greenwood Square, Suite 128 Bensalem, PA 19020

(215) 639-0801

Dated: January 29, 2019

### IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA

#### CASE MANAGEMENT TRACK DESIGNATION FORM

David Kuzmanich

CIVIL ACTION

Telephone	FAX Number	E-Mail Address				
(215) 639-0801	(215) 639-4970	akarpf@karpf-law.com				
Date	Attorney-at-law	Attorney for				
1/29/2019		Plaintiff				
(f) Standard Management -	Cases that do not fall into an	y one of the other tracks.	(X	)		
commonly referred to as the court. (See reverse si management cases.)	ases that do not fall into tract complex and that need special de of this form for a detailed	explanation of special	(			
exposure to asbestos.	ng claims for personal injury	•	(	)		
(c) Arbitration - Cases required to be designated for arbitration under Local Civil Rule 53.2.						
(b) Social Security – Cases requesting review of a decision of the Secretary of Health and Human Services denying plaintiff Social Security Benefits.						
•	rought under 28 U.S.C. § 22	•	(	)		
	LLOWING CASE MANA					
plaintiff shall complete a Cas filing the complaint and serve side of this form.) In the ex designation, that defendant si the plaintiff and all other part to which that defendant belie	e Management Track Design a copy on all defendants. (Sevent that a defendant does not all, with its first appearance, ies, a Case Management Traves the case should be assign		me ( evers g sai	of ie id		
Target Corporat	ion	NO.				
v.	<b>;</b>	•				

(Clv. 660) 10/02

### UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA

DESIGNATION FORM
(to be used by counsel or pro se plaintiff to indicate the category of the case for the purpose of assignment to the appropriate calendar)

Address of Plaintiff: 301 Iris Road, Cherry Hill, NJ 08003							
Address of Defendant:1 Mifflin Street, Philadelphia, PA 19148							
Place of Accident, Incident or Transaction: Defendant's place of business							
RELATED CASE, IF ANY:							
Case Number: Judge: Date Terminated:							
Civil cases are deemed related when Yes is answered to any of the following questions:							
Is this case related to property included in an earlier numbered suit pending or within one year     Yes      No X     previously terminated action in this court?							
2. Does this case involve the same issue of fact or grow out of the same transaction as a prior suit  Yes  No X  pending or within one year previously terminated action in this court?							
3. Does this case involve the validity or infringement of a patent already in suit or any earlier  No X  numbered case pending or within one year previously terminated action of this court?							
4. Is this case a second or successive habeas corpus, social security appeal, or pro se civil rights  Yes  No X  case filed by the same individual?							
I certify that, to my knowledge, the within case is / is is not related to any case now pending or within one year previously terminated action in this court except as noted above.							
DATE: 1/29/2019 ARK2484 / 91538  Attorney-at-Law / Pro Se Plaintiff Attorney I.D. # (if applicable)							
Апонеу-и-дин / 1 го во 1 шину							
CIVIL: (Place a √ in one category only)							
A. Federal Question Cases:  B. Diversity Jurisdiction Cases:							
□       1. Indemnity Contract, Marine Contract, and All Other Contracts       □       1. Insurance Contract and Other Contracts         □       2. FELA       □       2. Airplane Personal Injury         □       3. Assault, Defamation							
4. Antitrust							
5. Patent 5. Motor Vehicle Personal Injury 6. Labor-Management Relations 6. Other Personal Injury (Please specify):							
7. Civil Rights 7. Products Liability 8. Habeas Corpus 8. Products Liability - Asbestos							
9. Securities Act(s) Cases 10. Social Security Review Cases  9. All other Diversity Cases (Please specify):							
11. All other Federal Question Cases							
(Please specify):							
ARBITRATION CERTIFICATION  (The effect of this certification is to remove the case from eligibility for arbitration.)							
I, Ari R. Karpf , counsel of record or pro se plaintiff, do hereby certify:							
Pursuant to Local Civil Rule 53.2, § 3(c) (2), that to the best of my knowledge and belief, the damages recoverable in this civil action case exceed the sum of \$150,000.00 exclusive of interest and costs:							
Relief other than monetary damages is sought.							
DATE: 1/29/2019  ARK2484 / 91538  Attorney-at-Law / Pro Se Plaintiff  Attorney I.D. # (if applicable)							
NOTE: A trial de novo will be a trial by jury only if there has been compliance with F.R.C.P. 38.							

### CIVIL COVER SHEET

The JS 44 civil cover sheet and the information contained herein neither replace nor supplement the filing and service of pleadings or other papers as required by law, except as provided by local rules of court. This form, approved by the Judicial Conference of the United States in September 1974, is required for the use of the Clerk of Court for the purpose of initiating the civil docket sheet. (SEE INSTRUCTIONS ON NEXT PAGE OF THIS FORM.)

	·					
I. (a) PLAINTIFFS			DEFENDAN	T <b>S</b>		
KUZMANICH, DAVID			TARGET CORP	TARGET CORPORATION		
			ļ		Philadelphia	
(b) County of Residence of		mden	County of Residen	ce of First Listed Defendant P (IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES O		
(EX	KCEPT IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES	יי	NOTE: IN LAND	CONDEMNATION CASES, USE TH	HE LOCATION OF	
			THETRA	CT OF LAND INVOLVED.		
(c) Attorneys (Firm Name, A	(ddress, and Telephone Number)		Attorneys (If Know	n)		
Karpf, Karpf & Cerutti, I	P.C.; 3331 Street Road, T	Two Greenwood	Square,			
Suite 128, Bensalem, PA	. 19020; (215) 639-0801;	akarpf@karpf-l	aw.com			
II. BASIS OF JURISDI	CTION (Place on "Y" in One B	or Only)	III. CITIZENSHIP OF	PRINCIPAL PARTIES	(Place an "X" in One Box for Plaintif)	
		ox Only)	(For Diversity Cases Only		and One Box for Defendant) PTF DEF	
1 U.S. Government Plaintiff	X 3 Federal Question (U.S. Government Not a	a Party)	Citizen of This State	1 1 Incorporated or Prin of Business In T	ncipal Place 4 4	
2 U.S. Government Defendant	4 Diversity (Indicate Citizenship of	Parties in Item III)	Citizen of Another State	2 2 Incorporated and Pr of Business In a		
			Citizen or Subject of a Foreign Country	3 3 Foreign Nation	6 6	
IV. NATURE OF SUIT					of Suit Code Descriptions. OTHER STATUTES	
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☐ 110 Insurance Ď 120 Marine	PERSONAL INJURY ' 310 Airplane	PERSONAL INJUR' 365 Personal Injury -	Y 625 Drug Related Seizure of Property 21 USC 88	422 Appeal 28 USC 158 423 Withdrawal	' 376 Qui Tam (31 USC	
I 130 Miller Act	315 Airplane Product	Product Liability	5 690 Other	28 USC 157	3729(a))  400 State Reapportionment	
140 Negotiable Instrument		367 Health Care/		PROPERTY/RIGHTS	☐ 410 Antitrust	
<ul> <li>150 Recovery of Overpayment</li> <li>&amp; Enforcement of Judgment</li> </ul>	320 Assault, Libel & Slander	Pharmaceutical Personal Injury		820 Copyrights	0 430 Banks and Banking	
151 Medicare Act	' 330 Federal Emptoyers'	Product Liability	1	0 830 Patent	0 450 Commerce	
152 Recovery of Defaulted		368 Asbestos Personal		<ul> <li>835 Patent - Abbreviated</li> <li>New Drug Application</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>460 Deportation</li> <li>470 Racketeer Influenced and</li> </ul>	
Student Loans	340 Marine	Injury Product Liability		840 Trademark	Corrupt Organizations	
(Excludes Veterans)  153 Recovery of Overpayment	345 Marine Product Liability	PERSONAL PROPER	RTY LABOR	ESOCIAL SECURITY	0 480 Consumer Credit	
of Veteran's Benefits		370 Other Fraud	<ul> <li>710 Fair Labor Standards</li> </ul>	861 HIA (1395ff)	<ul> <li>490 Cable/Sat TV</li> <li>850 Securities/Commodities/</li> </ul>	
160 Stockholders' Suits		371 Truth in Lending	Act	<ul> <li>862 Black Lung (923)</li> <li>863 DIWC/DIWW (405(g))</li> </ul>	Exchange	
190 Other Contract		380 Other Personal Property Damage	<ul> <li>720 Labor/Management Relations</li> </ul>	0 864 SSID Title XVI	890 Other Statutory Actions	
<ul> <li>195 Contract Product Liability</li> <li>196 Franchise</li> </ul>	' 360 Other Personal Injury	385 Property Damage		' 865 RSI (405(g))	0 891 Agricultural Acts	
1701141011150	' 362 Personal Injury -	Product Liability	' 751 Family and Medical		<ul> <li>893 Environmental Matters</li> <li>895 Freedom of Information</li> </ul>	
	Medical Malpractice	PRISONER PETERO	Leave Act 790 Other Labor Litigation	PEDERAL PAX SINTS	Act	
REAL PROPERTY     210 Land Condemnation	CIVIT RIGHTS I	Habeas Corpus:	791 Employee Retirement	<ul> <li>870 Taxes (U.S. Plaintiff</li> </ul>	0 896 Arbitration	
210 Land Condemnation     220 Foreclosure		463 Alien Detainee	Income Security Act	or Defendant)	899 Administrative Procedure	
0 230 Rent Lease & Ejectment	EL III Employment	510 Motions to Vacate	3	D 871 IRS—Third Party 26 USC 7609	Act/Review or Appeal of Agency Decision	
3 240 Torts to Land	1 443 Housing/	Sentence 530 General	İ	20 030 7009	© 950 Constitutionality of	
245 Tort Product Liability     290 All Other Real Property		535 Death Penalty	IMMIGRATION	Const.	State Statutes	
250 All Other Real Property	Employment	Other:	<ul> <li>462 Naturalization Application</li> </ul>	tion .		
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Proceeding St		ppellate Court	(sp	ecify) Transfer		
	IFMLA (29USC260	te under which you a	are filing (Do not cite jurisdictional	statutes uniess aiversuy).		
VI. CAUSE OF ACTION	Brief description of caus Violations of the F	e: MLA and Penns	ylvania common law.			
VII. REQUESTED IN COMPLAINT:		A CLASS ACTIO		CHECK YES onl JURY DEMANI	y if demanded in complaint: D: XYes 'No	
VIII. RELATED CAS	E(S)					
IF ANY	(See instructions):	UDGE		DOCKET NUMBER		
1/29/2019		SIGNATURE OF AT	ORNEY OF RECORD			
FOR OFFICE USE ONLY		()				
RECEIPT# A	AMOUNT	APPLYING IFP	JUDG	E MAG. JU	UDGE	

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